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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5270th meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 September 2005, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council supports the Statement issued in New York on 20 September 2005 by the Quartet, which is annexed to this statement.

The Security Council urges the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to cooperate, along with other parties concerned, with the efforts to achieve the goals set out in the Quartet Statement.

The Security Council calls for renewed action in parallel by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on their obligations in accordance with the Roadmap, to ensure continued progress towards the creation of an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

The Security Council stresses the importance of, and the need to achieve, a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace."

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Annex

Quartet Statement
September 20, 2005
New York

Representatives of the Quartet – U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in New York to discuss the Gaza disengagement and the prospects for movement towards peace in the Middle East.

The Quartet recognizes and welcomes the successful conclusion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank and the moment of opportunity that it brings to renew efforts on the Roadmap. The Quartet reiterates its belief that this brave and historic decision should open a new chapter on the path to peace in the region. It paid tribute to the political courage of Prime Minister Sharon and commends the Israeli government, its armed forces and its police for the smooth and professional execution of the operation. It also expresses its appreciation for the responsible behavior of the Palestinian Authority and people for helping maintain a peaceful environment during the evacuation. The Quartet applauds the close coordination between the Israeli and Palestinian security services during the process. These significant developments create new opportunities and call for renewed focus on the responsibilities of all parties. The conclusion of disengagement represents an important step toward achieving the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

The Quartet commends continued cooperation between both parties and the U.S. Security Coordinator, General William Ward, on security issues related to the disengagement. The Quartet calls for an end to all violence and terror. While the PA leadership has condemned violence and has sought to encourage Palestinian groups who have engaged in terrorism to abandon this course and engage in the democratic process, the Quartet further urges the Palestinian Authority to maintain law and order and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. The Quartet reaffirms the continued importance of comprehensive reform of the Palestinian security services. The rule of law through authorized security institutions is fundamental to democratic practice. The Quartet expresses appreciation to those parties which have made contributions to the security reform effort, particularly Egypt, the European Union, and the United States. Finally, the Quartet welcomes the agreement between the Governments of Israel and Egypt on security arrangements along the Gaza-Egypt border.

At today's meeting, Quartet Special Envoy Wolfensohn's report on his current efforts and initiatives was discussed. The Quartet encourages his further work to facilitate continued discussion between the parties to build on the success of disengagement. The Palestinian Authority should demonstrate its ability to govern, and all members of the international community should look for ways to support these efforts. The Quartet will continue to lead international efforts to support sustainable growth of the Palestinian economy and to strengthen the overall capacity of the Palestinian Authority to assume its responsibilities through an aggressive pursuit of state building and democratic reform efforts. Given the critical importance

of free movement in the West Bank to the viability of the Palestinian economy, the Quartet urges an easing of the system of movement restrictions, consistent with Israel's security needs. The Quartet reaffirms that coordinated action by the international donor community is crucial for the success of the Quartet Special Envoy's Quick Impact Economic Program, as well as for the longer term three year plan for Palestinian development. In this regard, it notes the importance of the $750 million in assistance which will be disbursed to the Palestinian Authority during the remainder of this year. The Quartet urges Arab states to implement existing commitments and to engage fully and positively in response to the Special Envoy's initiatives. To ensure the success of this effort, the Quartet views continued progress on institutional reform of the Palestinian Authority, as well as progress in combating corruption, as essential. The Quartet also welcomes the announcement of Palestinian Legislative Council elections and upcoming municipal elections.

Looking beyond disengagement, the Quartet reviewed progress on implementation of the Roadmap. The Quartet calls for renewed action in parallel by both parties on their obligations in accordance with the sequence of the Roadmap. As part of the confidence-building process the Quartet urged both sides to return to the cooperative agenda reached at Sharm el-Sheikh. Contacts between the parties should be intensified at all levels. The Quartet charges the Envoys to keep progress under review.

Both parties are reminded of their obligations under the Roadmap to avoid unilateral actions which prejudice final status issues. The Quartet reaffirms that any final agreement must be reached through negotiation between the parties and that a new Palestinian state must be truly viable with contiguity in the West Bank and connectivity to Gaza. On settlements, the Quartet welcomed the fact that, in areas covered by disengagement, Israel has gone beyond its obligations under the first phase of the Roadmap. The Quartet expresses its concern that settlement expansion elsewhere must stop, and Israel must remove unauthorized outposts. The Quartet continues to note with concern the route of the Israeli separation barrier, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land, cuts off the movement of people and goods, and undermines Palestinians' trust in the Roadmap process as it appears to prejudge the final borders of a Palestinian state.

The Quartet members exchanged views on the Russian proposal to hold an international meeting of experts in Moscow. Contacts on this matter will continue, taking into consideration the need to give attention to the various aspects of the Middle East situation, including multilateral matters.

The Quartet reiterates its commitment to the principles outlined in previous statements, including those of May 4, 2004, May 9, 2005, and June 23, 2005, and reaffirms its commitment to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based upon U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.